Project Proposal

Proposal Title: **Black Ridge Fuels Reduction and Vegetative Restoration** **Proposal Number:** 1408

DWR Region: Southeastern Region **Lead Agency:** BLM **County:** Grand

Project Manager: Brian Keating **PM Phone:** 4356133717 **Regional Priority:** Within Focus Area

Project Type: Terrestrial Habitat **Proposed Start Date:**

Project Location: The treatment is located on the Black Ridge Mesa, which is located roughly 10 miles south of the city of Moab in the southeastern portion of Utah

Project Description: BLM will utilize a combination of hand cutting/piling, bullhog/mastication, pile burning, and ATV seeding on 1,500 acres to reduce fuel loads and enhance wildlife habitat.

Description of Problem/Need: In the early 1960's, the BLM reduced pinyon-juniper woodlands in many areas across the Black Ridge project area through the use of an anchor chain-type treatment in which trees were upended and root balls exposed. Slash created from the chaining was left on site and much of it remains today adding to the fuels load problems. Maintenance of the chaining has not occurred since it was implemented and as a result, pinyon and juniper trees have re-established and become the dominant vegetation in some of the treatment units. In other areas that had not been chained, pinyon and juniper trees have increased in density leading to and increased fuel hazard and have displaced ground cover such as grasses and shrubs. Lastly, areas that were once open sagebrush communities have experienced pinyon/juniper encroachment, which is leading to a loss of vegetative diversity and wildlife habitat.

The goal of treating vegetation is to restore ecosystem health by reproducing the natural variability, stability, and diversity of the vegetative communities within the project area. In addition, successfully completed treatments enhance public and firefighter safety by providing an increased range of suppression strategies.

Objectives: The Moab Fire Zone and Monticello Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) propose to reduce vegetative fuels and implement vegetative/habitat restoration activities within an approximate 30,107 acre project area of public lands administered by the BLM.
The goals of the proposed fuels reduction and vegetative restoration treatments would focus on: 1) protecting wildland interface communities, 2) reducing fuel loading, 3) creating fuel breaks, 4) enhancing wildlife habitat and 4) restoring vegetative communities in a mosaic pattern across the project area.

Relevance to Strategic Plans: The WAP focus areas are the same as the UPCD focus areas. Black Ridge falls within one of the WAP focus areas of SE Utah. The proposed action for the Black Ridge Project is derived from The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) which guides all BLM resource management actions. Other national policies which direct and guide management actions include The National Fire Plan, Healthy Forest Restoration Act and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act 1978 to name a few. In addition, the proposed action is consistent with the 2008 Moab Resource Management Plan (RMP) and the Moab Fire Zone Fire Management Plan.

Potential Risks: A delay in the treatment of the Black Ridge project areas would continue to place the communities, natural vegetation and wildlife habitat at risk from the effects of a catastrophic wildfire.

Proposed Methods: Treatments would be implemented through a combination of mechanical and hand cutting, utilizing a bullhog or mechanical shredder along with chainsaws and other hand tools. The objectives would be to create an assortment of mixed-density pinyon/juniper groupings with treatment ranging from no cutting to the complete removal of pinyon/juniper trees. Various activities would be continued in unit increments until all targeted vegetation within the project area had received treatment, although areas with existing sagebrush and/or native grasses would be avoided. Project objectives of greater spacing, open sage meadows and light surface fuels would be the encouragement of understory growth, the reduced potential for high-intensity fire, and the protection of cultural resources.

Treatment units within the entire project area may be seeded following or prior to treatment with both native and selected non-native grasses, forbs and browse species. Seed selection is based upon the most current data regarding the establishment of species likely to promote successional changes toward the desired vegetative community. Seeding would be accomplished with a broadcast spreader or harrow dragged behind an ATV, or by aerial methods. Seeded portions of the treatment area would be rested from grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons following seeding.
Due to scope and complexity of the project area, combined with budgetary constraints, treatments would be identified and implemented over a number of years. It is estimated that in total, no more than 60% of the total acres of the project areas would be treated. Currently, over 9,000 acres have received archeological clearances and are identified for treatment.

Aerial seeding of 1,500 acres and ATV broadcast application of seed on 250 acres would occur in the fall of 2009. Mechanical removal (bullhog, hand thin & pile and lop & scatter) would follow or precede the seed application on 1,500 acres. It is anticipated that the vegetative thinning and seeding for the first phase of treatment units would be completed no later than June 2010.

Shapefile Name: HPD 2010\GIS Shape Files - Proposals\SER\1408.shp **Seed Source:** GBRC

UPCD Reg Team Coord Date: 01/20/2009

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Proposed NEPA Action:

Proposed Arch Action:

☑ **Vegetation Monitoring** ☐ **Wildlife Monitoring**

Monitoring Information: The BLM fuels program will utilize a series of rangeland plots and fuel transects to monitor the effectiveness of the fuels treatments and subsequent revegetation treatments. In additions, the Black Ridge area has a number of historical rangeland trend plots, which will be monitored and incorporated into future monitoring activities. All monitoring activities will involve quantitative and qualitative techniques and be repeated annually for the first three years following treatment. All research studies will result in reports, which will be available for other agencies and partners. Black Ridge Range Trend study 13A-8 is located 1n the project areas.

Grazing Management: The Black Ridge Project falls primarily within the Hatch Grazing allotment. Currently, the BLM is conducting a reassessment of the allotment to update the grazing management plan. Potentially, this allotment may be split to involve two different permittees. The planned treatments will be incorporated into the grazing management plan to identify any additional issues than need to be considered or

SPECIES BENEFITING

Elk	Mule Deer	Townsend's Big-eared Bat	Allen's Big-eared Bat
Fringed Myotis	Spotted Bat		

LAND OWNERSHIP

Owner	Acres
BLM	1500
Total	1500

PROPOSED FUNDING

Source	Amount Requested	Date Approved	Amount Approved
DNR Watershed (FY10)	$213,701.00		$0.00
BLM FLR	$472,971.00		$0.00
Totals	***$686,672.00***		***$0.00***

PROPOSED BUDGET

Item	Description	DWR Account	Partner Contrib.
NEPA	NEPA and Treatment monitoring	$0.00	$15,000.00
Contractual Services	aerial seed 1,500 acres @ $12/acre	$18,000.00	$0.00
Seed (GBRC)	2,000 acres @ $97.85	$195,701.00	$12,814.00
Contractual Services	500 acres of lop & scatter	$0.00	$27,500.00
Archaeological Survey		$0.00	$126,657.00
Contractual Services	1,000 acres of bullhog	$0.00	$135,000.00
Monitoring		$0.00	$5,000.00
Contractual Services	250 acres of thin/pile	$0.00	$131,250.00
Contractual Services	250 acres of pile burning	$0.00	$12,250.00
Contractual Services	250 acres of ATV harrow	$0.00	$7,500.00
	Totals	***$213,701.00***	***$472,971.00***

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Project Map: